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AUTHOR Huber, Bettina J.
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ABSTRACT

Recent investigations of gender are fostering structurally deterministic explanations by focusing exclusively on social processes. A balanced understanding of femininity involves considering psychic forces in conjunction with social factors. An interpretation of Freud currently being articulated in Europe delineates unconscious forces fruitfully viewed as interacting with environmentally given attitudes. A summary of the new perspective highlights cultural aspects of Oedipal processes. As individuals enter the world outside the home, early insights filter social influences impinging upon them. Conversely, structural conditions can undermine women's inward acceptance of secondary status. Non-familial social organization and exclusion from the larger society are instrumental in this. (Author)

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THE INS AND OUTS OF FEMININITY: AN INTERACTIVE PERSPECTIVE

Bettina J. Huber

University of California, Santa Barbara

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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A B S T R A C T

Recent investigations of gender are fostering structurally deterministic explanations by focusing exclusively on social processes. A balanced understanding of femininity involves considering psychic forces in conjunction with social factors. An interpretation of Freud currently being articulated in Europe delineates unconscious forces fruitfully viewed as interacting with environmentally given attitudes. A summary of the new perspective highlights cultural aspects of Oedipal processes. As individuals enter the world outside the home, early insights filter social influences impinging upon them. Conversely, structural conditions can undermine women's inward acceptance of secondary status. Non-familial social organization and exclusion from the larger society are instrumental in this.

THE INS AND OUTS OF FEMININITY: AN INTERACTIVE PERSPECTIVE

Rekindling of the feminist spirit has sparked widespread practical action, considerable scientific research, and scattered attempts at theoretical explanation. In the sociological sphere, extensive empirical work has been undertaken recently, leading to a variety of insights about women and their place in society. These are slowly being combined into a coherent view of the processes whereby female children become feminine women, thereby enhancing our understanding of the social psychology of human development. It may be, however, that emergent sociological explanations of gender are limited by an, often unstated, assumption that social structural considerations can provide exhaustive explanations. Other causal factors tend to be ignored altogether or cast in a wholly dependent role. Psychological processes, especially, have been stripped of independent causal status by current environmental stress. Arriving at a balanced understanding of feminity, therefore, may require tempering prevailing orientations. Rather than viewing social forces in isolation, it might be beneficial to adopt a broader perspective on the genesis of adult gender conceptions. The following pages suggest that we might expand our theoretical horizon by treating psychic factors as independent elements in the evolution of femininity, since doing so allows consideration of interaction between two clearly distinct entities.

In Western patriarchal society, femininity means being subordinate or incomplete, but it manifests itself in both primary and secondary forms. The first appears as the largely unconscious belief in one's own inferiority, while the second encompasses prevailing rationales for women's disadvantaged position in the social structure. These two aspects are formed by largely independent processes, but, once established, both interact in upholding traditional gender conceptions. Only the reciprocal influence between primary, psychic femininity and secondary, social femininity can account for women's

willingness to embrace their subjugation for so long. Further, the modes of expression and interaction typifying these two elements vary with social structure. Under different historical conditions, differing patterns of femininity prevail, as the last section of this paper attempts to explicate. It presents some preliminary speculations on the implications of explicitly focusing on interaction between internal and external dimensions of femininity.

CONTEMPORARY CONCEPTIONS OF GENDER

Recent discussions of gender roles tend to concentrate on showing that differences between the sexes are not inherent, or biologically given, but emerge from social patterns and structures. Although the importance of cultural and psychological processes is sometimes mentioned, the focus is on documenting the impact of sociological factors. Little effort is made to assess the ways in which other forces can mitigate or exacerbate social processes. These tendencies emerge most clearly in overviews of how the socialization process gives rise to feminine adults (see, for example, Angrist and Almquist 1975, pp. 27-30; Freeman 1971; Hochschild 1973, pp. 1015-1022; Kohlberg 1966; Mischel 1966; Weitzman 1975).

Social scientists seem to view socialization as an all-powerful causative agent. Gender role notions are seen to arise from long-term cumulative learning, based on reenforcement and the need to conform to others' expectations. The point has been made that socialization pressures are ascribed an undeserved power and efficacy in much of the literature. Their apparent effectiveness, it is said, is partially due to subsequent institutional constraints; these make up for the imperfections of the socialization process in relegating women to their secondary status (Weitzman 1975, pp. 136-139). The possibility that socialization can be highly inconsistent, but still effective, because females come to see themselves as subordinate at a very early age, is never considered. As a result, the depth of femininity'

and the extent to which it is an integral part of the individual self-concept, may be seriously under-estimated.

Not unlike socialization discussions, broader theoretical explanations of woman's social position focus on social structural factors and external socialization pressures (see, for example, Benston 1971; Bird 1968; Collins 1971; Daniels 1975; Firestone 1970; Friedan 1963; Greer 1971), as do analyses of factors responsible for the rise of the Women's Movement (Freeman 1973a; J. Huber 1976). These general discussions, be they scholarly or popular variants (e.g., Willis 1977), are often informed by the radical perspective so prevalent during the Sixties, and reflect its tendency to see individuals as powerless pawns of the corporate power elite. In consequence, women are portrayed as being manipulated and pressured into being feminine for fear of violating social norms and expectations (e.g., Greer 1971). Cultural forces are sometimes viewed as buttressing social processes in these explanations, but the importance of internal psychological processes is sharply downgraded, if not negated altogether (see, for example, Kantor 1976). It is implied that without external structural support, psychological components would be of little importance. In the following pages, a more active view of the individual is developed. The human infant is seen as pursuing an active quest for its place in the world. The child accepts prevailing cultural beliefs and roles because they provide answers to several basic dilemmas. Thus, gender distinctions are not simply imposed from without by dint of endless repetition, but are sought out as markers circumscribing an already designated niche in a patriarchal culture.

If psychological factors are mentioned in recent sociological discussions, they tend to be viewed as one of a multitude of barriers women must overcome (e.g., Roby 1972; White 1972). These internalized norms and values fade in significance when compared to the variety of structural barriers operating simultaneously. Further, psychological and sociological

causal factors are always considered as separate entities or aspects. Possible interaction between the two never receives systematic attention, although the need for such an approach has been noted (Tresemer 1975:310). Instead, a uni-dimensional notion of causality prevails; psychological attitudes and beliefs are considered wholly dependent upon, and shaped by, environmental pressures (such an orientation underlies discussions by, among others, Benston 1971 and Collins 1971).

In large part, sociological neglect of internal psychic processes stems from the fact that until quite recently psychological explanations were used to keep women in their place by blaming them for their own dissatisfaction. If women wanted careers, or were dissatisfied with the suburban idyll created during the Fifties, they were viewed as maladjusted and unable to psychologically accept their biologically given femininity. Recent efforts to give social factors their due (see, for example, Tuchman 1975) are, thus, largely beneficial. We may be reaching the point, however, where continued neglect of other forces, especially deep-seated psychological processes, is giving rise to a one-sided view of human nature and of how females become feminine. We may be in danger of succumbing to what might be called structural determinism, or "the sociological fallacy," to use Scheff's (1975, p. 2) terminology. It appears that the focus on social structure, which began as a much-needed corrective, is gradually giving rise to the conviction that the social is not merely a necessary explanatory consideration, but a sufficient one.

A key aspect of such structural determinism is the notion that institutions create adult personality, and thus structural alterations are the key to human betterment, automatically leading to liberation of oppressed individuals. Gender role change tends to be discussed in exclusively institutional or structural terms, focusing on concrete behavior and interaction (see, for example, Rossi 1971; White 1972:305-307). The effect of social change on internal psychic dynamics is rarely taken note of, nor

are psychological orientations considered in evaluating the likelihood of women utilizing structural innovations, such as communal child-care, for example. In consequence, the possibility that "...the institutions of the former society are smuggled into the new society through the personalities of participants..." is ignored (Scheff 1975, p. 2). Rather, it is assumed that as structural barriers to achievement are dismantled in occupational and educational arenas, women will make their presence felt in pursuits previously deemed uncongenial to them; and, in fact, they are already doing so. As new generations emerge in the near future, unencumbered by old gender role socialization, sex-specific traits, attitudes and occupations will become evermore scarce, according to current sociological explanations. Since clear-cut gender role differences are dysfunctional in the socially fluid modern world (Slater 1964), as is the traditional family, sex role socialization is no longer appropriate, and will inevitably atrophy. The continued presence of gender roles is merely a manifestation of temporary "cultural lag," soon to disappear (Freeman 1971, p. 136).

Although it generally recognizes that change is not instantaneous, the current sociological view does not envision vociferous opposition from women to the removal of structural barriers. Yet this is precisely what has occurred in recent years; a good many women are loudly demanding retention of just those structures which institutionalize their secondary status. The presence of this large sub-set of members, actively accepting their traditional role, seems to set women off from other oppressed groups, perhaps indicating that their status is not just socially induced and maintained. It may be that the behavior of the all-too-vocal conservatives can be better understood if the psychic or primary component of femininity is given independent status in conjunction with the social dimension. Doing so would also alleviate the present difficulty in dealing with exceptions--those women who achieve occupational success in spite of

formidable structural barriers. Even though psychological traits clearly differentiate certain sub-groups, such as Black women, for whom femininity does not have the typical debilitating character, explanations of their exceptional pattern deal exclusively with anomalies in childhood environment and adult social milieu (see Epstein 1973; Myers 1975).[1]

Perhaps the time has come to broaden our analytic sights by examining interaction and reciprocal causation between two independent forces: the generally neglected primary, or psychic, femininity and the widely discussed secondary, or social, femininity arising from long-term socialization pressures. Such an undertaking is severely hampered by American social sciences' general neglect of psychological processes; our knowledge of them is considered limited (Kagan 1964; Walters and Stinnett 1971, p. 103). The recent surge of gender roles research has not been helpful in this respect, due to its preoccupation with challenging biological-psychological explanations of women's status. In debunking old notions by highlighting the previously underrated significance of social structure, scholars have simply dispensed with the psychic as an explanatory consideration, rather than refining our understanding of internal dynamics (for an exception, see Chodorow 1974). The psychoanalytic approach has suffered an especially severe eclipse, largely because it is considered responsible for the widespread notion that dominant feminine traits, such as passivity, are biologically mandated.

It is ironic that the vehement rejection of this understanding of Freud's insights has led to neglect of a completely new view of the import of his work. In recent years, various European discussions of Freud's thought (e.g., Laplanche and Pontalis 1968; Mitchell 1974) have argued that he conceived of infantile development as an essential part of the cultural transmission process. Thus, they provide us with a set of culturally, not biologically, conditioned psychic forces that might serve as a fruitful basis for an interactive perspective.[2] Juliet Mitchell's

recent book, Psychoanalysis and Feminism, is of special relevance in this respect, as she focuses specifically on the genesis of feminine attitudes and behavior. One of her major theses is that basic cultural notions of femininity are conveyed to the child during the Oedipal period. Such beliefs are linked to the repressed desires of this developmental phase, thereby becoming part of the unconscious. These primary psychic forces influence subsequent development and are an important factor in adult femininity.

Considering their impact is, thus, essential in any investigation of femininity. In doing so, care must be taken not to replace structural determinism with an equally inadequate psychological bias. This means pointedly ignoring the traditional psychoanalytic view that adult life is little more than a continuous replay of infantile desires and dilemmas. Rather, we must imbed the psychic within a structural frame and examine how social factors perpetuate women's early acquired tendency to view themselves as the second sex. In this way we may arrive at a balanced understanding of how structure and psyche reciprocally influence one another, thereby generating adult femininity.[3] Before considering this interplay in more detail, the process whereby cultural and physiological demands interact in early life must be briefly delineated.

PRIMARY PSYCHIC FEMININITY

Both within and without psychanalytic circles there is considerable diversity of opinion about just what constitutes the discipline's domain of investigation. A major concern of current re-assessments of Freud's thought is isolating the scientific object of psychoanalysis. These discussions indicate that his major concern was the nature of the unconscious, which means that psychoanalysis legitimately investigates this realm of the mind and its manifestations. Dealing with unconscious forces is the uniquely new element in Freud's theories. He discovered it by default; as the only means of accounting for a series of psychic acts inexplicable

in terms of conscious or secondary process (Mitchell 1974a, p. 254). Freud investigated the unconscious by isolating its transformed conscious forms, but argued it was governed by primary processes quite unlike the rational mentality governing our daily lives (Mitchell 1974a, pp. 1-15).

To facilitate his investigations, Freud developed the psychoanalytic relationship, a dyadic configuration in which the analyst enables the analysand to articulate or remember repressed infantile desires. In most cases the immediate purpose is therapeutic, but analytic techniques also serve as methodological devices for investigating unconscious mental processes inaccessible in any other way. The conventional survey techniques favored by social scientists tell us nothing about the unconscious, and more qualitative methods, including the in-depth interview, yield only linited insight. Thus, until a better approach is developed, we must rely on the data generated by psychanalysis for our understanding of unconscious processes.[4] Since Freud's day, analytic experience has generated a considerable body of evidence, which serves to inform psychoanalytic discussions of developmental processes, although this is not always explicitly noted.

Laplanche and Pontalis (1968, p. 12) refer to the directly observable telltale signs of unconscious activity as "fantasy," which they view as encompassing all aspects of imaginary life. This includes conscious daydreams and nocturnal dreams, as both are direct, albeit formally different, expressions of processes largely sealed off from conscious awareness. Mitchell (1974a) articulates a similar view in her discussion of "mental life." Freud's primary concern, she points out, was not with physical objects, but with our images of them. What the young child acquires during the first years of life are the basic precepts and symbols of human culture, so that each individual need not start the process of human history anew. Thus, when discussing masculinity or femininity Freud is not referring to biology, but to culturally given mental representations. We are masculine or feminine, not because we are born that way, but because we learn to think of ourselves as such in the process of finding a place in society.

What Mitchell's book highlights, is how, according to Freud, femininity comes to be an active living mental force.[5]

The prevailing conception of Freud's intellectual journey is that rejection of the theory of seduction in 1897 allowed him to discover, and articulate, the theory of infantile sexual development. This theory, delineated in the "Three Essays," posits a biologically anchored sexuality whose expression and endogenous development is in conflict with the external environment. The means and mechanisms individuals gradually evolve for dealing with these opposing forces is one of the major preoccupations of psychoanalysis. Through a careful examination of the evolution of Freud's thought, Laplanche and Pontalis (1968), argue that this stress on the 1905 Essays is misplaced, as Freud never totally abandoned the seduction theory. Instead, he retained elements of it as the basis for a much less clearly articulated understanding of infancy and fantasy, which did not emerge until the end of his life.

Beginning with the idea that seduction is not real, but imagined, Freud eventually delineated three original fantasies which, in some form, are part of individual imagination and social mythology (e.g., primal scene or parental coitus; seduction; and castration). These fantasies of origins provide explanations for the infant's major enigmas, thereby enabling it to apprehend its predefined place in a world differentiated along generational and sexual lines. Final comprehension of the myths highlights what Freud later conceptualized as the Oedipus Complex, which, in a "wild form," is already contained in the theory of seduction, according to Laplanche and Pontalis (1968), but not fully developed until twenty years later. Thus, the significance of the Oedipal period lies not so much in the repression of infantile sexuality, as in the child's final assumption of its culturally specific status.

Mitchell (1974a) also embeds Freud's conception of early childhood development in a cultural context, arguing that the Oedipus Complex is the crucial period for learning where one belongs in the scheme of things.

Since sex is a key element in determining one's place, basic notions of its significance also become codified at this time. Thus, rather than viewing biological differences as the primary basis for gender distinctions, as other psychoanalytic accounts hold, Mitchell points to prevailing patriarchal conceptions as the major explanatory variable. Further, she argues that Freud was merely describing how early development actually occurs, and not, as is generally assumed, prescribing how the infantile phase ought to proceed (Mitchell 1974a, p. 107). Insofar as the patterns he delineates are universal, it is not because of their biological basis, but because patriarchy is the only socio-cultural form historically known.[6]

At birth the child does not question its place in the scheme of things, assuming that it is one with its surroundings. This sense of unity is ruptured as soon as a desired object is not immediately at hand, something probably occurring to most infants during the first weeks of life. This experience, which is frequently repeated, triggers a gradual process of increasing individuation, dominating the whole infantile period. It also sets the stage for the emergence of sexuality as a separate entity.[7] Through repeated object loss, the infant begins to differentiate itself from its environment and comes to understand itself as an independent being. This evermore inclusive alienation process, probably stretching over the course of several years, impels the child to recognize that its place in the world is problematic. For, if the initial unity does not exist after all, the child must wonder what it is and where it comes from. Much analytic data indicates that this enigma is formulated in terms of questions of origin. The question "where do I come from?" eventually locates the origin of the individual in the primal scene and lays down the difference between generations. The fantasy of seduction, first by the mother and later by the father, answers the child's question about why it feels, thereby dealing with the origin, and recurrent presence, of sexuality. Finally, the enigma of the difference between the sexes is

resolved by the castration fantasy, which provides an explanation for the differential status of males and females. These symbolic answers to the questions of origin do not emerge instantly, but the search for them contributes to the child's evolving sense of individuality, as all deal with aspects of differentiation. This implies that sex is a key axis of individuation, and that notions of femininity are intertwined with one's sense of independent being. In consequence, challenging gender definitions involves jeopardizing a basic element of self.

The original fantasies represent fairly abstract answers to the child's ruminations about its status. Comprehending them thus requires some symbolic ability, implying that these cultural myths cannot be fully understood until linguistic ability is present. In Western society the emergence of coherent speech coincides with genetal dominance, and thus, fantasy answers are articulated in these terms. Freud's theory of infantile sexuality has generally been understood to mean that such a constellation is inevitable. Mitchell (1974a, p. 22, 59) argues that no such sequence of development is mandatory. Various bodily regions may be dominant at given times, but there is much overlap between phases. At birth, the infant experiences a mass of sensations, encompassing oral, anal and phallic impulses. Which are dominant when, if ever, depends on the behavior of the child's caretakers. In Western society the genital prevails at the close of the infantile period because childrearing practices have robbed oral and anal sensations of their satisfaction by external regulation. Thus, the Oedipus Complex, which requires mastery of language for its resolution, occurs during the phallic period, not because of inner or biological necessity, but as a consequence of the external social patterning imposed on early development. By the same token, infantile sexual development is sequential, not because of the child's endogenous needs, but because cultural childrearing practices serve to focus parents' and children's attention on given areas in turn. In sum, it is socially governed adult actions that make certain areas sexual foci (Laplanche and

Pontalis 1968, p. 17), just as it is culture which supplies the answers to the questions of origin. The key to infantile development is not an endogenous sequence of sexual stages, but the process whereby the child is directed to its appropriate place in a patriarchal world.

Given the apparent arbitrariness of the psychosexual stages informing many psychoanalytic discussions, a more meaningful division of infantile development can be made in terms of the pre-Oedipal and Oedipal phases. A major distinguishing characteristic between these periods is the significance attributed to the difference between the sexes. During the pre-Oedipal period, which in Western society encompasses oral, anal and initial phallic dominance, the infant does not perceive gender differences, nor does it exhibit sex-based preferences (Mitchell 1974a, pp. 16-30, 42-61). At birth the infant is bisexual, embodying the masculine-feminine antithesis. It also exhibits both active and passive inclinations. Reconciling these conflicting desires is one of the most difficult challenges of mental life; one that is never completely resolved, even though in adulthood one aspect dominates (Mitchell 1974b, p. 32). During the pre-Oedipal period both aspects of these antitheses are reflected in children's behavior, and the two sexes exhibit largely similar patterns. Even the phallic phase initially has the same meaning for both. Although the boy's sensual pleasure derives from his penis, and the girl's centers on her clitoris, sexuality is uniformly active. In addition, gender differences have no real meaning, despite genital dominance; physical differences are perceived, but not considered significant. Thus, boys are still confident they can have children, and girls believe they will eventually grow a penis (Mitchell 1974a, p. 25).

During this early period, the sexes are similar in other respects too, due to the mother's centrality in the infant's world. Although an affectionate relationship may develop with the father, the mother is the first love object of both boys and girls. This emotional attachment is the defining characteristic of the pre-Oedipal period, but it is a tie to an active, all-powerful, figure rather than to a feminine one (Brunswick in

Fliess 1948, p. 249; Freud 1974a, p. 50), thereby making her the initial referent of the seduction fantasy; only later is she replaced by the father (Freud 1974a, pp. 50-51; Laplanche and Pontalis 1968, p. 16).

As Oedipal issues begin to dominate, gender assumes a new meaning and marked developmental differences between the sexes emerge. During this period, the child comes to understand that it does not possess absolute potency or power. Rather, it must accept that its power is dependent upon its position in the familial and social order of things. This social location is specified prior to the child's birth by the family's lineage and status in the communal structure, as well as by the nature of parental anticipations of the impending arrival. These early discussions of its immediate, and eventual, role in the world are frequently recounted to the infant through social myth and "family sayings" (Laplanche and Pontalis 1968, p. 11; see also Mitchell 1974, p. 391). Thus, the Oedipus Complex centers on the infant's gradual comprehension of where it belongs in a network of taboos and laws. In finding its place, it incorporates the basic tenets of patriarchal culture into the core of its being. On a more concrete level, the small child must find its place in a world consisting primarily of two parents who must be obeyed and toward whom sexual desires are culturally prohibited (Mitchell 1974a, pp. 61-101, 350).

For the male, the Oedipal experience is set in motion when the pre-Oedipal dyad becomes a triangle, as the boy recognizes that the father's presence hinders his desired possession of the mother. The situation is resolved when the boy relinquishes his maternal love object and identifies with the father. Doing so is facilitated by the Castration Complex, which symbolizes the boy's apprehension that continued desire for the mother may result in loss of his penis at the hand of the stronger father. Castration fear is a combination of fantasy and reality, an actual threat not being essential for its emergence. It represents, in the concrete, literal terms typical of childhood thinking, the boy's dim realization that maleness is to be valued, and that lack of masculinity (or a penis) is a sign of

lesser status in the world. Thus, desired incest succumbs to the stronger fear of castration and the Oedipus Complex is smashed. At the same time, the boy recognizes that his secondary status is not permanent, his present size, or lack of adulthood, being a key deterrent to attainment of his immediate desire. Thus, he has the assurance that his masculinity will enable him to possess similar love objects in the future. In addition to giving up their hopes of possessing the mother, boys vanquish the last remnants of castration anxiety by identifying with the feared aggressor. This identification differs from earlier ones in that it has the power of authority. It is the basis of the superego, which, because of its role in transmitting the patriarchal "law of the father," becomes the repository of the cultural heritage. Thus, the mythical answers the boy eventually finds for his original enigmas, or questions, specify generational and sexual distinctions, thereby illuminating his present and future status in a patriarchally defined world.

Girls arrive at similar symbolic explanations, but these have quite different implications, due to the differential impact of sex on their place in the world (Mitchell 1974a, pp. 95-104; 1974b, pp. 34-35). All children enter the Oedipal phase in much the same way; girls, too, desire the mother and resent the father's intrusion into the dyad. Like boys, they soon realize that size, or adulthood, is a powerful determinant of status and that lack of maturity alone will prevent their replacing the father. But one's cultural place is not defined merely by size; sex is also a key factor, as the girl slowly comprehends. In the context of a patriarchal culture, her recognition that castration is not a danger, because she will never have a penis, is extremely painful. It means not only that she can never possess a mother substitute, but that her secondary status is permanent rather than a temporary aspect of childhood (Mitchell 1974b, p. 34). In contrast to the boy, it will remain an integral part of her position in the world. In coping with this blatantly unjust state of affairs, the little girl turns on the apparent agent of her misery. She becomes enraged at the mother for having made her inferior by allowing

her to be born without a penis, and violently represses the primary maternal attachment, along with much of her sexuality. She transfers her affection to the father, who now represents the only hope for the penis, which would make her complete in a patriarchal culture. This change of love object marks the onset of the positive Oedipus Complex for the girl. It represents a way-station on the route to motherhood (Freud 1974b, pp. 87-88), in which the girl can passively attract the father and gain his love, despite her incompleteness. Should this situation be found too satisfying, the girl may never move beyond it (Mitchell 1974a, p. 97). More frequently, her eventual disappointment at the father's unwillingness to give her the gift of a penis, leads her to transfer her affection to a husband, and subsequently, a male child. His birth finally makes the woman feel complete, for only he can provide a penis which is truly a part of herself (Freud 1974a, p. 87, 91). Thus, the groundwork is laid for the adult woman's overpowering desire for children--the so-called maternal instinct--and the perpetuation of the species is assured.[8] In addition, the girl's Oedipal insights provide the basis for her later need to seek, and obtain, validation from men. If the significant males in her life approve of, and support her, a woman can do anything; otherwise, she is often incapacitated by self-doubt.

In sum, the symbolic insights of the Oedipal period make boys aware that their potency, or power to impose their will on others, is limited by their immaturity, and that this temporarily gives them a secondary place in the world. Girls comprehend the implications of generational differences too, but they make an additional, quite painful, discovery during the Oedipal phase; their sex makes their secondary status permanent. Given their intellectual immaturity, they are incapable of doubting this seemingly immutable truth.[9] Rather, they accept their similarity to the de-throned mother, developing a secondary attachment for her. They also become feminine for the first time, vying for the father's love through passive flirtation and seduction.

By turning toward the father in this manner, the girl tacitly acknowl-

edges her castration and penis envy. The latter is very real, but not because of physiological considerations. Rather, it represents a child-like articulation of the insight that in patriarchal society being a man is better. By the Oedipal phase, *the little girl dimly perceives* that the people around her favor males, but her, as yet, limited capacity for abstract thought prevents her from understanding this properly. To use Piaget's terms, the child is "pre-operational" and deals with the world solely on the basis of immediately perceivable reality (Inhelder and Piaget 1958). In keeping with this thought-style, typical of ages 2 to 6, the girl understands the mythic account of the difference between the sexes in its most concrete terms. In addition, the child's immaturity hinders it in dealing with the overpowering feelings generated by Oedipal experiences. Its inability to defuse them through sophisticated rational processes is a further contributing factor to the literal understanding of Oedipal insights. In fact, mythical explanations tend to be distorted by very young children so that they are more in keeping with concrete familial relations. A good example of this is Bergman's childhood misunderstanding of Mozart's "Magic Flute," which has been incorporated into his recent film, exaggerating the opera's patriarchal message[11] (Coser 1977).

Since the penis has acquired significance through its role in accounting for the girl's own origin, it constitutes the most important distinction between herself and boys. In consequence, this physical lack becomes the mark of her inferiority.[12] Thus, penis envy is a child's way of expressing the wish to occupy a favored status in the social world into which she has been thrust. And, because this desire is conceptualized during the Oedipus Complex, its initial childish formulation becomes part of the unconscious forces we must deal with throughout a lifetime. It is one of the emotionally-based beliefs forming the core of primary femininity.

AN INTERACTIVE PERSPECTIVE

The preceding cursory overview of the new interpretation of Freud's work has highlighted the role of patriarchal forces in shaping basic elements of the unconscious. It has stressed that during infancy children locate their place in the world with the aid of basic tenets of the patriarchal culture they are born into. These understandings, repressed as part of the unconscious, form the basis for traits manifesting themselves in later life; Mitchell enumerates several closely linked to femininity.[13] As all appear to derive from the sense of inferiority or incompleteness acquired during the Oedipal period, this more inclusive formulation guides subsequent discussion.

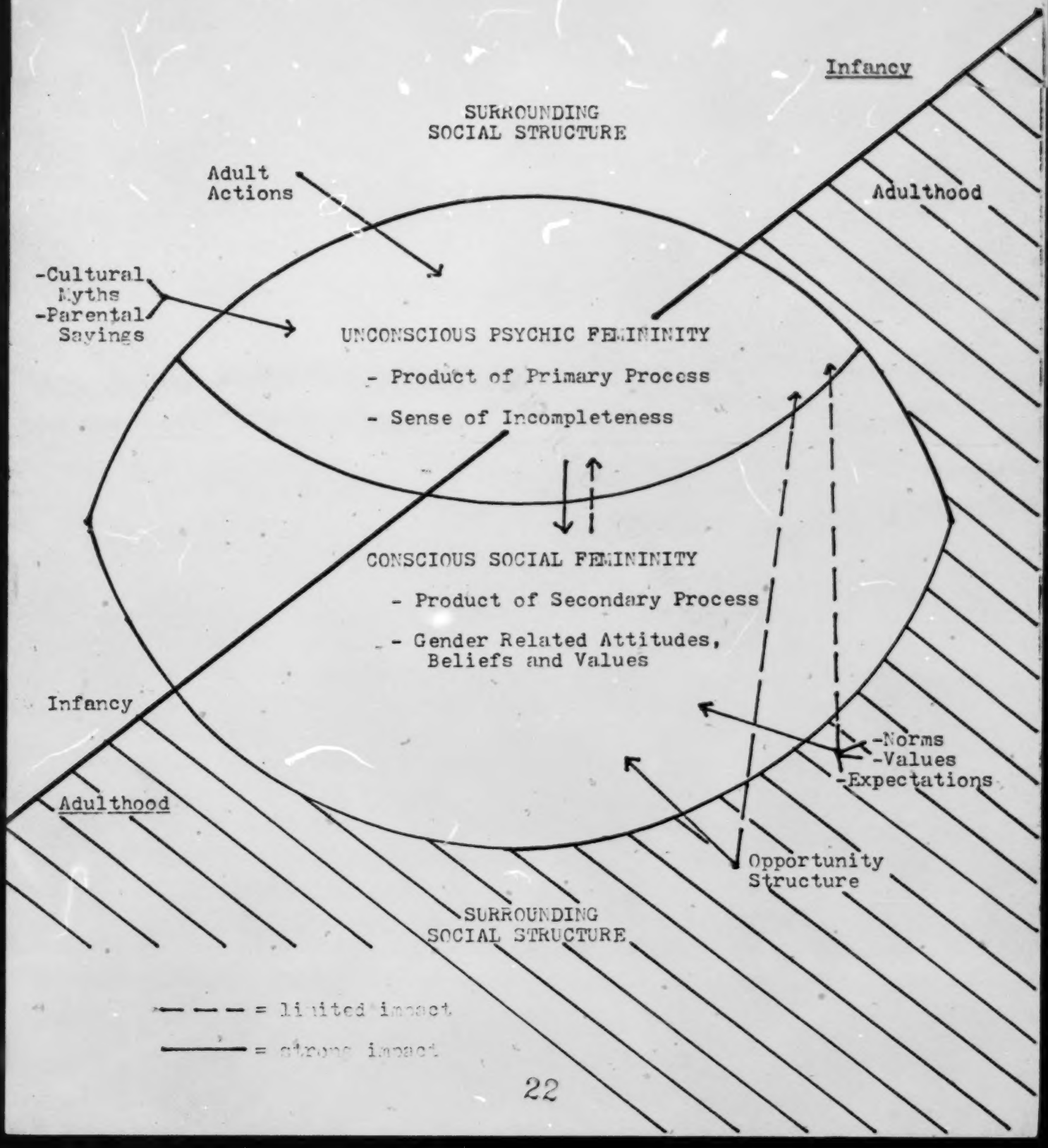
The diffuse belief in one's own inferiority is the crux of psychic or primary femininity. It is one of those unspoken assumptions unwittingly guiding our lives without ever being questioned. Environmental forces are of considerable importance during the genesis of psychic femininity. Elementary cultural understandings, especially the patriarchal "law of the father," are conveyed to the child through the nature of the family. These symbolic conceptions impinge upon the child with sufficient frequency so that they are eventually incorporated into its understanding of the world. Since this process occurs during the first years of life, psychic femininity reflects the characteristics of primary process and is largely unaffected by the secondary process dominating adult awareness, as Figure 1 indicates. In later life, as part of the unconscious, psychic femininity manifests itself primarily in the realm of fantasy and mental life. As a result, it exists relatively independently of conscious daily activity and is largely immune to immediate experience. This means primary femininity is easily overlooked by social scientists' focusing on concrete behavior and verbal attitudes.

Psychic femininity is, thus, a very different "cultural" entity from the conscious attitudes and beliefs dealt with in gender roles research.

The latter are rationally acquired conceptions of woman's role and place in society. These attitudes, values and beliefs focus on the appropriateness of various types of behavior, not on the adequacy of one's essential self. Thus, they are closely linked to daily experience and may appear as the sole cause of feminine behavior patterns. The orientations encompassed by social or secondary femininity are molded by frequently encountered environmental pressures. As Figure 1 indicates, behavioral norms and social expectations for desirable feminine attributes are of special importance in the formative process. These are eventually internalized, becoming individually held attitudes. As popularly accepted notions of what is desirable vary, so does social femininity. These conscious attitudes are also modified by structural conditions delimiting the opportunities and experiences available to individuals.

In sum, the above considerations suggest that femininity might profitably be conceptualized in terms of two relatively distinct entities, each of which contributes to the expression and perpetuation of adult patterns. Insofar as unconscious psychic forces have a strong impact on attitudes and behavior, it is because their impact is magnified by socially induced convictions developed during childhood and adolescence. By the same token, while adult patterns clearly reflect key elements of secondary or social femininity, their strength derives from the unseen underpinnings of primary femininity. Insofar as the two forces are divergent, rather than congruent, individuals experience considerable inner conflict. As the psychic is resistent to short-term social change, this conflict tends to be felt as an inner pressure to revert to traditional patterns. Thus, structural alterations do not have a pure or undisturbed influence on individuals; rather, their impact is mediated or amplified by psychic factors. But, at the same time, the manner in which the unconscious manifests itself is dependent upon environmental conditions individuals encounter in the larger society. Our task, therefore, is to abandon the general predilection for examining social and psychic femininity

Figure 1 : Development of Internal Forces Impinging on Feminine Behavior Patterns



in isolation, focusing instead on how they interact.

Devising research to test, and elaborate, such an interactive perspective is a difficult task. One might begin, however, by considering how positing the existence of unconscious structures enhances our ability to explain patterned features of social life. This means pinpointing unconscious manifestations in everyday activity that cannot be explained by more obvious environmental factors. In the process, insight into the nature of the interaction between primary and secondary forces might emerge. By assuming that both elements of femininity are important, direct observation of behavior, or in-depth interviews about what people think and feel, may yield evidence of each. Further, by not considering psychic and social forces in isolation, but as part of an interactive system, we may arrive at more comprehensive explanations of social processes and behavior. In doing so, we must always bear in mind that we are searching for descriptive explanations of what now occurs, and not for prescriptions of what ought to, or must, be.

The need for a broader perspective is quite evident in discussions of gender role research, which are replete with "unexpected" findings remaining inexplicable due to current structural determinism. One example, among many, appears in Maccoby's (1977) recent discussion of family change and socialization. She puzzles over the fact that even though children consider them "playmates," they "...obey their fathers more readily than their mothers."

> "This is quite a consistent finding, and rather mysterious. We do not know whether mothers are less consistent in following through on their demands, whether fathers are more imposing because of their size and louder voices, whether children see their fathers as dominant over their mothers and therefore assume they are the final authority in the household, or what" (Maccoby 1977, p. 13; italics added).

Including unconscious psychic forces in our array of explanatory possibilities, provides a straight-forward explanation for this "mysterious" finding.

As a result of Oedipal experiences, children link the culturally given patriarchal authority of the father to their own father. Regardless of his concrete behavior, he always maintains an aura of authority which the mother lacks. Even if she is the family's disciplinarian, an evermore common pattern (Maccoby 1977. p. 12), she cannot match his stature. Since the family is embedded in a patriarchal culture, children accord their fathers more authority than their mothers (Mitchell 1974a, p. 394), regardless of who is actually dominant or plays any particular role. This is a good illustration of how patriarchal principles, which become incorporated into the unconscious, have an impact on behavior. It also shows that psychic forces exert an influence quite independently of concrete social roles and conditions.

In beginning to incorporate unconscious factors into sociological explanations in the above manner, we must recognize that the perspective on infantile development outlined in the preceding section is still evolving. It is, thus, most profitably viewed as a preliminary formulation of a very promising approach, and is employed in this sense here. Further, in utilizing a psychoanalytic perspective, we must be aware that all aspects of the approach are not equally valuable. A key difficulty is that regularly occurring variations in Oedipal development have not been delineated in a systematic manner. These are of special importance in distinct racial, ethnic or social class groups, where exceptional family patterns are perpetuated for a long period.[14] A second limitation of many psychoanalytically informed discussions is a hazy conception of the domain being dealt with. Earlier, it was noted that, for Freud, the object of psychoanalysis is the nature of the unconscious. This means that the discipline itself does not provide direct knowledge of how unconscious processes affect everyday life, as this is outside its domain. To argue that the unconscious is universal, as Freud does, does not imply that its role in daily life is invariant. In fact, it is generally acknowledged that in cases of psychopathology, mental life or fantasy

exercises unusual force; this is why they provide a particularly fruitful avenue of psychoanalytic investigation. Thus, much psychoanalytic material is precluded from yielding insight into the impact of the unconscious on the everyday life of "normal" people, whose repression is extensive and complete. This has not been recognized, leading to a tendency to universalize daily experiences of neurotic and psychotic analysands, even though they are clearly atypical. An approach seeming to deal with this difficulty uses psychoanalytic insights to "explain" social and individual patterns evident in daily life. Such analyses tend to assume, however, that unconscious forces have sole or sufficient explanatory power. Thus, they are similar to sociological discussions considering only structural factors, and suffer from the same problem of unidimensionality. In consequence, we may have relatively little valid knowledge about the role of unconscious mental life in daily experience. The interactive approach being proposed here may provide a better means of assessing the role of psychic structures in generating patterned features of social life than traditional psychoanalysis has.

SOCIALLY STRUCTURED EXPRESSIONS OF ADULT FEMININITY

Thusfar, this paper has suggested that contemporary discussions of gender roles, by focusing exclusively on the secondary social femininity emerging during childhood, have neglected the other, largely hidden, aspect of femininity, formed during the first years of life. A newly emergent interpretation of Freud's view of infantile development was discussed in some detail, as it seems to provide the means of enriching the currently one-sided social view with a psychic component. Thus, it has been postulated that human development gives rise to two, largely separate, aspects of femininity. Once established, they <u>interact</u> with one another <u>and</u> the surrounding environment to produce adult behavior patterns. Within different social structures, the nature of the psychic-

social interaction varies, leading to divergent expressions of femininity. The last part of this paper deals with the nature of this interactive process in more detail. Special attention is given to the proposition that the strength of primary psychic femininity varies with prevailing social conditions.

The psychic side of the interactive system can be usefully thought of as a filtering mechanism adding a patriarchal hue to the individual's perception of, and reaction to, diverse social situations. Thus, anticipated individual actions encounter less internal doubt or resistance if they are in keeping with unconscious orientations. Similarly, if incoming stimuli are in keeping with Oedipal insights, their impact is amplified, while if they are contrary to basic psychic orientations their [redacted] impact is attenuated or even nullified. I have frequently observed dramatic display of this mechanism in women students' reactions to comments on their work. They typically discount a whole series of positive remarks, but are devastated by a single negative comment, especially if made by a man. The applause of ten women cannot match the thunder of a single male voice, be it discordant or not.

As a result of these internal processes, relatively little external reenforcement is needed to insure that women accept their secondary position. The idea that their proper place is in the home, and that they should be subordinate to men, seems quite "natural" to them in light of the lingering reminders of Oedipal experience retained in the unconscious. Even if opportunities for achievement in male spheres are readily available, many women fail to take advantage of them because of doubts generated by their own psychic orientations. Those women who do exploit opportunities often enjoy the presence of a male who encourages and reassures them; it is he who helps them overcome the internal barriers whose foundations are laid so early in life.[15] This implies that providing truly equal opportunities for both sexes in all social spheres may not lead to actual equality

because the impact of primary femininity has not been mitigated. Just as internal psychic forces prevent some women from exploiting structural opportunities, they induce other women to vehemently oppose any expansion of traditional roles. These latter are outraged by proposed changes, such as the Equal Rights Amendment, not because they are narrow-minded, but because they know in the very core of their being that equality between the sexes is impossible.

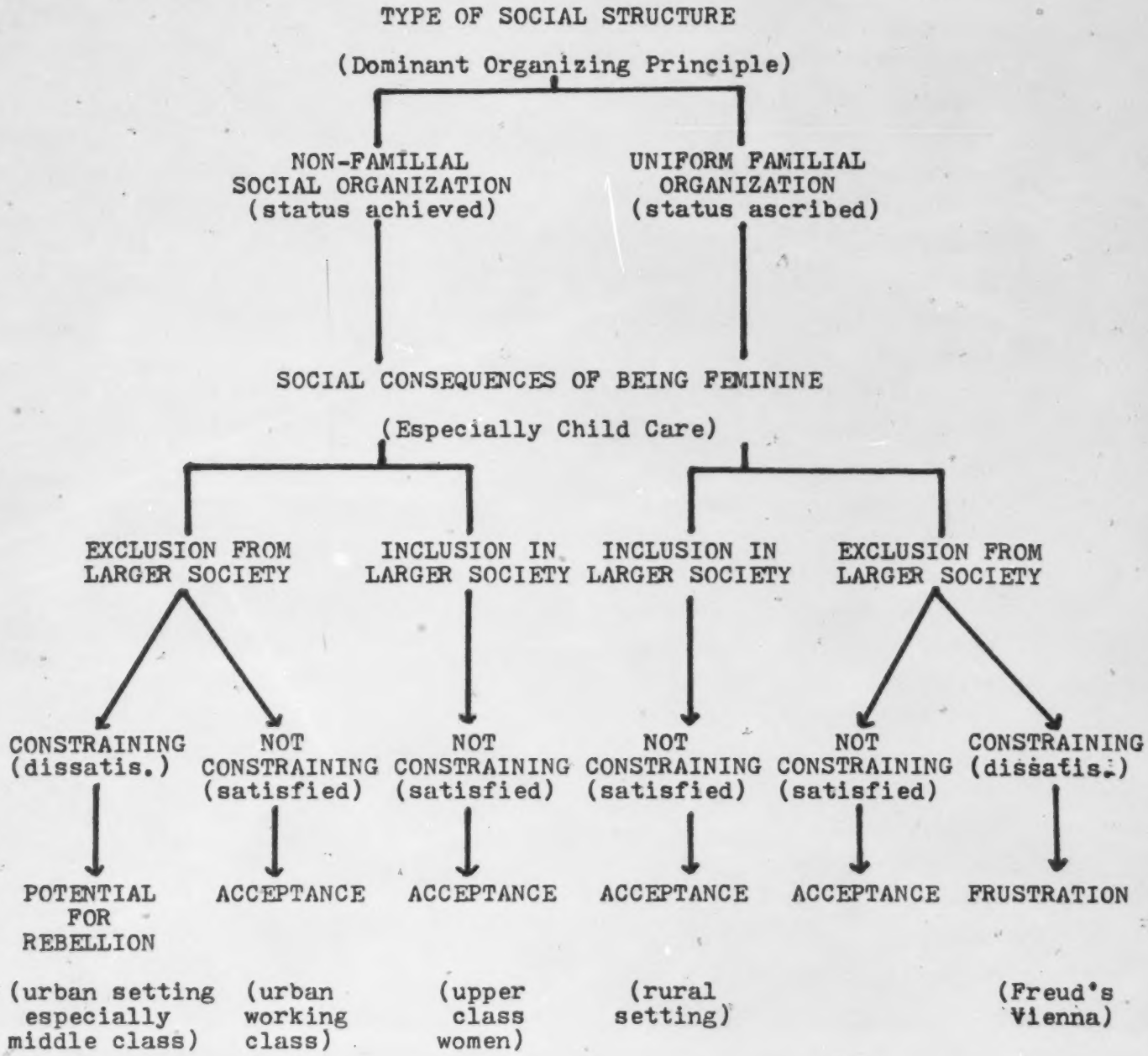
The above seems to imply that psychic femininity has an overpowering impact. This would be congruent with the psychoanalytic view, which is generally understood to imply that traits formed during the infantile period are the immutable basis of personality. It may be, however, that this is accurate only in societies whose structural arrangements are closely keyed to the basic tenets of patriarchal culture. In such stable, relatively homogeneous, settings early childhood traits do indeed become dominant aspects of adult personality. But they do so because of the consistency between culture and society, rather than because of their overpowering strength. This gives rise to the possibility that as social structure becomes less familially organized, or in times of change and disorder, the impact of psychic forces can become seriously attenuated. In such periods women are more likely to stray from their secondary position.

Structural factors condition the way unconscious Oedipal insights are lived out in adulthood in at least two respects. First, structure, by determining the consequences of femininity, determines the degree to which women are satisfied with their life situations. In this respect the implications of being responsible for childrearing are key. If such family-centered activities do not result in exclusion from the larger society, women will not be grossly disadvantaged vis-a-vis men, and will embrace their femininity enthusiastically. If, on the other hand, womanhood and motherhood are coupled with exclusion from most social spheres,

negative valuation and limited life chances result. In such situations, rebellion can occur, provided the possibility of a better external setting is perceived as real, and internal doubts are not overpowering. Providing experiences permitting one to challenge the inferiority embedded in primary femininity represents the second way structure impinges on adult patterns. If society is organized along the same principles as the family, women have no opportunity to view their position within the home in a different, perhaps critical, light. Rather, by reproducing the features typical of the Oedipal setting, unconscious beliefs are called to the fore and reenforced. As a result, women lack the critical tools to challenge existing order, and accept it as inevitable. The presence of settings organized in terms foreign to the family, in contrast, may allow women to succeed in spite of primary femininity.[16] In such societies, occupational and educational experience, for example, may lead women to question the inevitability of their subordination. Such a critical perspective, to use Mitchell's (1971) formulation, involves an awareness of the contradiction between the structure of the nuclear family and the social organization of labor. It is instrumental in successful rebellion because it undercuts the dominance of psychic forces. Non-familial organization alone will not lead women to challenge their position, however, as Figure 2 indicates. For this to occur, the other structural variable, exclusion from the larger society, must also be present.

Those societies characterized by uniform organization in all spheres are the only ones in which unconscious notions of femininity truly pervade adult personality. In this instance, all social institutions either utilize the family as their basic building block or else reflect its organizational principles in their structure. More specifically, the infantile setting is reproduced when primary relationships prevail, and when social position and life chances are determined by ascriptive characteristics. For present purposes, age and sex are the key traits, but

Figure 2: STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS AND THE ACCEPTANCE OF FEMININITY



lineage is also a crucial status criterion. The pre-industrial Western world was typified by a social structure organized solely in familial terms, as are contemporary rural settings, especially in the Third World. The Vienna of Freud's day is illustrative of this social form and its consequences for women. Nineteenth century Viennese society was structured around the family, with the consequence that the adult women Freud encountered were living in an intimate face-to-face setting quite similar to their early childhood surroundings. Thus, the conditions of their later life served to call forth, and reenforce, infantile insights stored in the unconscious. Such environmental re-stimulation of Oedipal experiences gives them unrestricted play in adulthood, thereby lending powerful force to psychic traits formed early in life. Viennese women were, indeed, living out their infantile dilemmas in adulthood, but not because of the overpowering strength of these events. Rather, *by being exposed to* lifelong uniformity of social structure, women were innerly impelled to embrace their secondary position in spite of its limitations.

Social use of selected familial organizing principles may have a similar, if less global, effect. In a largely unnoticed fashion, their presence subtly reenforces psychic forces, thereby inhibiting women in opposing or questioning their secondary status. One such organizing characteristic is the tendency to assign status or authority in terms of traits such as age and sex. Such authority distinctions need not be pronounced; the essential point is that they appear to be based on ascribed characteristics, insofar as they exist.[17] In societies where social class distinctions are clear-cut, or where industry is organized in nepotistic terms, ascribed characteristics are clearly a dominant basis of organization. In such situations, even if gender is not a consideration in assigning status, the dominance of unconscious psychic beliefs is enhanced, and women are more likely to embrace their subordination. By the same token, if traditional religion is a dominant force, the tendency to accept a

secondary position is also more pronounced.

It may be the relative dominance of such ascribed distinctions in Western Europe and Japan that induces so many women in these areas to accept their subordination "freely" and enthusiastically. This is in contrast to the United States, where women tend to accept their position more grudgingly. The European-American divergence I am referring to is not a pronounced difference in orientation, but rather a subtle distinction in the quality of feminine acceptance. Among the majority of European women embracing their traditional pattern, one does not often find the somewhat sullen tone frequently encountered in the United States. In part this may be because there is more latitude for exceptional women in Europe than on this side of the Atlantic. That is, if a European woman is bound and determined to participate in the larger society, she does not seem to encounter the pervasive approbation and exclusion typical of the United States. She may be considered "eccentric," but is accepted as a worthwhile, if atypical, woman. This is especially true in the upper class, perhaps because its continued focus on individual heritage prevents the domestic isolation typical of industrial society. In fact, it may be the presence of a well-defined upper class in Europe that allows achieving women to remain feminine. As a result, the normative familial focus does not lead to the universal exclusion of all women from the larger society; thus, it is <u>felt</u> to be less oppressive than is the case in the United States.

Just as features characterizing the infant's early surroundings undercut women's ability to question their secondary status, the absence of such organizational features facilitates emergence of a critical perspective. In this respect, the limited importance of primary relationships in modern society may be beneficial. In an urban-industrial era intimate face-to-face relationships are confined to the sharply circumscribed family sphere, and industry is organized in terms of ability rather than family position. Thus, status is determined through meritocratic achieve-

ment criteria, rather than ascriptive traits, and impersonal secondary relationships prevail in most social spheres, especially the occupational. Such non-familial organization can be quite spotty and partial. Even in highly technocratic societies, unskilled and semi-skilled work settings may remain familial in form, for example. This means that job experience does not lead blue collar women to question their subordinate status, but simply reenforces their psychic femininity.

In contrast, many of the white collar professional women involved in the current Women's Movement are seasoned veterans of the impersonal bureaucracies characterizing the modern occupational world. Perhaps this is because their success in achievement-oriented social sectors enabled them to question their secondary status and its inevitability. This is not to suggest that bureaucracy and meritocratic evaluation alone account for the current Women's Movement; obviously a variety of factors contribute. The ethic of equality prevalent in American colleges, for example, has been instrumental in alerting women to the contradictions of their social status. In addition, socio-technical change in fertility patterns and in the nature of family care has played a part (J. Huber 1976), as has the emergence of an effective communications' network (Freeman 1973a). Nonetheless, bureaucratic arrangements, where status is not defined solely by sex and age, may be more crucial to women's equality than has generally been realized.[18]

Even though bureaucratic impersonality may facilitate women's ability to challenge their traditional status, it is an open question whether occupational experiences have an effective spillover effect on the family. So far, the feminist drive to institute equality in the public sphere has made a promising beginning; the idea of universal access to education, occupation and public services is rapidly becoming accepted by everyone. Attempted change within the family, on the other hand, has been quite limited, encountering considerable resistance (e.g., opposition to legisla-

tion dealing with child care). At the moment, a situation seems to be evolving in which women are equal in all areas, except one: the family. Yet, without basic change in this key structure, lasting equality, and the eventual abolition of patriarchy, are impossible.

Non-familial social organization provides the intellectual experiences or tools to challenge secondary status, but another aspect of social structure generates the desire to do so. The extent to which femininity is felt to be constraining depends, not on the nature of unconscious Oedipal insights, but on the structural limitations encountered in adulthood, as the brief discussion of European women implied. Woman's position as wife and mother will only be perceived as confining, if it is coupled with exclusion from the larger society. Although this situation need not be viewed negatively, it has been by women in urban industrial settings; thus they have formed the mainstay of feminist agitation. In the rural settings typical of pre-industrial society, in contrast, a familial focus is not exclusionary. Although women spend their lives in much the same familial setting, thereby always accepting the secondary status they came to believe in so early in life, doing so brings no great limitations or disabilities. As the family is the center of economic and social activity, the woman's subordinate position does not exclude her from participation, and she generally makes a vital contribution to survival. Women in this setting have little reason to object to their position and can see no great evil in being subordinate.

In highly technological urbanized settings this is not the case, however, as the family has ceased to be the mainstay of society. In consequence, by being confined to the domestic sphere, women are excluded from participating in the larger society and their status becomes constraining.[19] The price exacted from a woman desiring motherhood, as she is expected to, is lifelong lack of opportunity to do anything else. This is most prevalent in the middle class, since financial necessity frequently

forces urban working class women to be employed outside the home, even though they share their husband's belief that this is improper. Further, they are less likely to be dissatisfied with their exclusion from the larger society, as their men tend to be denied broader participation too. The middle class woman, on the other hand, is at a clear disadvantage vis-a-vis her husband, while having the financial means to live out a cultural view of her status carried over from an earlier era. It may be that lifelong exclusion is crucial if women are to be satisfied with such limitations. If a whole generation suddenly encounters a narrowing of its social position, it may respond by agitating for amelioration or an increase in privileges, but without necessarily challenging women's basic familial orientation. Resulting alterations in women's status will be of limited duration, as the early suffrage movement indicates.[20]

Contemporary American women appear to be paying a considerable price for living in a society no longer organized in familial terms, but still subscribing to the beliefs of a patriarchal culture (Mitchell 1974, pp. 408-15). Nonetheless, mental patriarchy is accepted with little question, precisely because its tenets are incorporated into the unconscious during the first years of life. In consequence, most modern women believe their confinement to the family is appropriate, and try to develop a link to the larger society by identifying with their husbands or sons. The latter truly become an extension of self and, in keeping with Oedipal experience, may provide a feeling of completeness and accomplishment. Women for whom such identification is impossible, are torn between quiet frustration, learning to accept incompleteness, and rebellion. In recent years an increasing number have chosen the last alternative, but it remains to be seen if their actions will lead to a lasting dislocation of patriarchal patterns.[21] Certainly, the probability of this occurring will be enhanced if social policies are not delineated exclusively in terms of structural change, but provide mechanisms for allaying internal doubts as well.

FOOTNOTES

1. Epstein (1973, p. 933), for example, comments on the irony that Black professional women thrive in a social structure so defeating to whites, yet does not systematically consider psychic factors in her explanation of their success.

2. A similar rejection of the biological interpretation of Freud is found in the work of Jacques Lacan. His emphasis on the need to understand Freud's work symbolically has been a key factor in European reassessments of psychoanalysis. Due to its complexity, Lacan's line of thought is not dealt with here.

3. This focus on interaction has much in common with Hochschild's (1975) notion of the "sentient actor," which seeks to link conscious rational behavior with culturally conditioned emotions. It is also in keeping with Scheff's (1975, pp. 1-4) notion that lasting personal change requires complementary alteration of the social milieu.

4. The analytic relationship may be a unique means of gathering data about unconscious processes, but it is only one form of therapy among many. Thus, to say it is an exceptional methodological tool is not to imply it is a superior, or even good, form of therapy.

5. Mitchell's cultural reading of Freud differs from that of most other psychoanalysts. She devotes considerable space to making the case that her interpretation is indeed correct, but it is an open question whether her reading reflects Freud's true intentions more accurately than the conventional biologically anchored view. Regardless of Freud's true purpose, I think Mitchell's view provides extremely fruitful insights into the nature of woman's place in a patriarchal culture. Thus, I confine myself to outlining those elements of her discussion that are relevant in the present context, leaving aside the question of whether Freud really meant it that way.

6. In the last section of her book Mitchell (1974a) uses the work of Levi-Strauss to formulate the hypothesis that Freud's insights apply not only to human development in modern Western society, but to all societies existing during recorded history. She argues that the exchange of women provided the original basis for patriarchy, and that the belief in male superiority has been maintained through time by the events of the Oedipal period. Thus, she argues that all civilization is patriarchal, a generalization not universally accepted. As Mitchell's discussion of early developmental processes in Western society would not be invalidated by their lack of applicability to all historically known societies, the universality of her argument has not been dealt with here. In any case, it is a question that anthropologists, presumably with the aid of further research, are better able to resolve.

7. Laplanche and Pontalis (1968) argue that sexuality and physical need are initially fused, the two becoming separated through the infant's early and frequent object loss. Functional need continues to be directed toward physical pacification, while sensual desire is satisfied auto-erotically. Laplanche and Pontalis (1968, pp. 15-16) do not understand auto-eroticism in the usual object-directed sense. Rather, they indicate that Freud conceived of it as objectless because of its focus on non-physical or sexual aspects of apprehended objects. Auto-eroticism differs from global functional pleasure, in that it is fragmented and organ-specific; thus, as soon as it arises, it can be satisfied immediately through imaginary processes. Desire for sensual pleasure eventually becomes completely disengaged from its physical object, as it can be dealt with through hallucination. Such imaginary fulfillment marks the origin of fantasy, as well as of sexuality, in the sense of an independent desire for erotic or sensual excitation.

8. At the same time, the adult woman's "need" for male children insures perpetuation of patriarchal distinctions from generation to

generation. Precisely because the woman needs the penis only a son can give her, she will treat male children as superior to female children (see Mitchell, 1974a, pp. 396-397).

9. Thus, it is precisely because small children lack adult sophistication that they formulate the type of explanations they do. Arguing that children come to comprehend mythical explanations at a very young age does not require imputing adult rationality to them. Such a formulation may suggest, however, that they comprehend more than is generally assumed, and more than they can verbalize or deal with. Thus, the fact that primary school children seem to know little about sexual processes does not invalidate the above discussion for several reasons. First, their ignorance may be more apparent than real. It may be that children simply cannot articulate their knowledge in adult terms, and thus cannot respond adequately to researchers' questions. Further, the whole impetus for Freud's concern with the unconscious was his observation that people "forget" about sexuality and have to re-learn the basics after infancy. Psychoanalytic theory began as an effort to explain why this is so (see Mitchell 1974a, p. 161). Finally, it is not being assumed that children necessarily comprehend the nature of reproduction in biologically correct terms. All that is implied is that they understand the special link between their parents and that this led to their creation. Whether they think that that reproduction occurs through kissing, touching or sexual intercourse is relatively insignificant (for an interesting discussion of how conceptions of sexual union change as children pass through oral, anal and phallic stages, see Brunswick in Fliess 1948, pp. 242-244).

10. While there is considerable dispute in various psychoanalytic accounts about the significance of penis envy, all accept its existence without question, due to the overwhelming analytic evidence (see, for example, Horney 1967; Klein 1965; Thompson 1964).

11. When Bergman saw the opera as a child he understood the relationship between Tamina, Sarastro and the Queen of the Night in nuclear family terms. He believed Sarastro to be Tamina's father, even though this is not the case in Mozart's text. Recently he has translated this childhood understanding into his filmed version, ostensibly to tone down the sexist aspects of the original (Coser 1977, p. 12).

12. The phallus, as the symbolic mark of dominance, might theoretically be linked to a number of physical objects, such as breasts, for example. It becomes equated with the father's penis, and thereby with that of all men, because of his position in a patriarchal culture.

13. Mitchell (1974a, pp. 113-121) specifies the following as "the marks of womanhood:" masochism, passivity, vanity, jealousy and a limited sense of justice. Whether these characteristics are really the essence of femininity, and as immutible as the psychoanalytic view implies, appears debatable. One is tempted to suspect that Mitchell's delineation of them stems, in part, from a mischievous desire to be provocative.

14. In terms of femininity, Black women are a good example of a variant developmental pattern (in this respect, see Epstein 1973). One can only speculate, of course, but it may be that the consistent father absence typifying generations of Black families, leads to an unusually direct and exclusive desire for children. Although the father may be periodically present, he tends to be symbolically unimportant to the Black mother. In consequence, the daughter's Oedipal attachment to her father, and subsequently her husband, may be relatively weak and fleeting. With the elimination of this intermediate stage, penis envy leads fairly directly to the desire for children. In this case, the Oedipal period would be characterized primarily by the recognition of castration and the subsequent repression of the attachment to the mother. The

inevitability and rightness of patriarchy is accepted, but the man as a husband is relatively unimportant; he simply represents the means of obtaining the desired child. In consequence, many Black women are not dependent on male validation in the way that whites tend to be. Instead they are quite independent and pursue a family-centered, rather than male-focused, lifestyle. They do not challenge patriarchal structures, but use their "feminine wiles" to benefit themselves and their children. Since motherhood includes insuring the physical survival of children, work or occupational attainment becomes an extension of the maternal role for many Black women (this is reflected in a study by Myers 1975). This suggests that the Black mother may have few doubts about the appropriateness of working and is relatively undisturbed about not having a husband. Such a sharp contrast to the prevailing white, middle class feminine pattern is a potentially fruitful area for further investigation.

15. The importance of such "facilitating" men has been commented upon in studies of women pursuing careers (Rapoport and Rapoport 1973, 255-261) and of those with serious ambitions to do so (Tangri 1972). In a similar vein, a study at Stanford found that the encouragement of an interested male is of considerable significance in enabling women to pursue their intellectual and occupational aspirations (M. J. Lozoff, as cited in Roby 1972).

16. Bernard (1964, p. 65) comments on how women succeed "accidentally" in her discussion of academics. She observes that those who succeed often do so by accident (e.g., they "happen" to get a good offer to teach), rather than because they aggressively pursue all opportunities. It is as if good fortune is thrust upon them, in spite of themselves. This appears to be typical of her own career, too:

> "I had been 'captured' in marriage before I had laid out any career plans. I had worked with and for my husband as ... if he had engaged me as an employee rather than married me. I had been 'forced' to succeed, almost

against my will. It was he who insisted that I get a doctorate. No hurry. Take your time. But do not abandon the idea." (Bernard 1977, p. 8)

17. A potential drawback of the supposedly "structureless" organizations so fashionable at present (see Freeman 1973b), is that in some cases the authority or power distinctions inevitably emerging have no apparent basis other than differences in ascribed traits. In consequence,such organizations may subtly reinforce women's internal belief in their subordination, especially when men become the acclaimed leaders. This is not to imply that men unfairly usurp power in such situations, due to the entrenched advantages their culturally acknowledged superiority affords them. Rather, they become leaders as a result of their greater experience in such matters. Due to the lack of clearly articulated bases for the legitimate exercise of authority, however, their power is perceived to derive from their gender, although this is not always consciously or clearly understood by female participants. Alternative organizations may not be congenial to women for another reason. By stressing creation of an intimate face-to-face setting they may exacerbate the influence of unconscious psychic forces. As Swidler (1976, p. 223) notes: "To a certain extent we may say that organizations attempting to operate collectively fall back on family life for ideology, norms and patterns of psychic functioning ... Free schools are certainly closer to family life than are most formal organizations in our society."

18. This implies that the debate about the relative merits of capitalism and socialism is of limited relevance to the status of women. Either social form contributes to feminine equality insofar as it is bureaucratic.

19. The key to this occurring is not so much widespread industrialization, as the emergence of an urban leisure class. Thus, in earlier pre-industrial eras, upper middle class women may have found their

position constraining too. In Madame Bovary, for example, Flaubert describes the dilemma of an ambitious woman, whose husband is satisfied as a middle class doctor, but who is unable to have a son to transfer her aspirations to. In her search for something better (and perhaps for inner satisfaction), she turns to the only avenue open to a woman of her day: liasons with aristocrats. Ultimately this attempt fails too, and she commits suicide. This book caused a tremendous uproar upon its appearance in the 1850's; perhaps people were scandalized because the story spoke so directly to the frustrations of the leisured women who read it.

20. The Suffrage Movement emerged at the turn of the century, at a time when large-scale urbanization was taking hold in the United States (see O'Neill 1971). Many middle class women were suddenly transplanted from a rural to an urban setting, losing their informal power and community role in the process. It may have been this sudden loss of taken-for-granted privileges that led to the agitation for more rights, especially the vote, that indispensible ticket to participation in urban affairs. Thus, the early feminist endeavor may not have been meant to challenge women's secondary position, as much as an attempt to preserve old rights, informally granted in rural settings. As urbanization took hold, new generations accepted the new limitations on women's position, feeling little need for a role in the larger society. Thus, universal suffrage did not mark the beginning of a movement for general equality between the sexes. For this to be possible, a broad spectrum of women first had to acquire experience in non-familial structures. This implies that the roots of the Suffrage Movement may be quite different, and more superficial, than those of the contemporary Women's Movement.

21. The preceding discussion should not be taken to imply that the overthrow of the nuclear family would resolve the dilemmas of woman's

social place. Although doing so might end the exclusion from the larger society, it does not speak to the larger issue of patriarchal culture. Simply doing away with the nuclear unit will not prevent children from learning to define their place patriarchally during the Oedipal period. The experience of the Israeli kibbutzim is a good illustration of this. Although childrearing has been successfully collectivized in these settlements, distinctions between the sexes have not diminished (Firestone 1970, pp. 214-216). In fact, the young women growing up in the kibbutz today are more accepting of their inferior status than were their mothers. In addition, the younger generation is trying to change existing arrangements so that child-rearing will once again be the mother's exclusive responsibility, at least in part (see Hazleton 1976). It appears that the kibbutz has not greatly changed the woman's image of herself. In part this is because the small baby is not simply being forced into a pre-defined place in the family. Rather, its very dependence induces it to participate actively in the definitional process. Thus, as long as the parent-child triad is maintained, even in its weak kibbutzim form, the baby becomes aware of it and accepts old patriarchal myths. In addition, the prevalence of primary relationships within the kibbutz may serve to exacerbate, rather than diminish, the impact of unconscious psychic forces in later years.

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